



Literary Criticism

➔ BOOKS:

The library may have books covering a specific author's life and writing. Use the Library's online catalog to locate books that have been written about the author you are researching. Do a [subject search](#) using the author's last name followed by first name (for example, type: **Steinbeck, John**). Pay particular attention to subject headings that include the words "Criticism and Interpretation" (for example, type: **Steinbeck, John 1902-1968 – Criticism and Interpretation**). To focus your research on a particular, well known title, you might also do a [subject search](#) using the title of the work (for example, type: **Grapes of Wrath**).

REFERENCE BOOKS:

Reference books are useful for overviews of a literary work. The information is concise and often highlights specific aspects of the work such as style, plot summary, literary themes, character analysis, historical context, as well as critical overviews.

Novels

<i>Novels for Students</i>	Ref PN 3385.N68
<i>Masterplots: 1,801 Plot Stories....</i>	Ref PN 44.M33 1996
<i>Critical Survey of Long Fiction</i>	Ref PN 3451.C75 2000

Short Stories

<i>Short Stories for Students</i>	Ref PN 3373.S56
<i>Masterplots II: Short Story Series</i>	Ref PN 3326.M27 2004
<i>Critical Survey of Short Fiction</i>	Ref PN 3321.C72001

Poetry

<i>Poetry for Students</i>	Ref PN 1101.P64
<i>Masterplots II: Poetry Series</i>	Ref PN 1110.5.M37 2002
<i>Critical Survey of Poetry</i>	Ref PN 1021.C7 2003

Plays

<i>Drama for Students</i>	Ref PN 1601.D595
<i>Shakespeare for Students</i>	Ref PR 2987.S47
<i>Masterplots II: Drama Series</i>	Ref PN 6112.5.M37 2004
<i>Critical Survey of Drama</i>	Ref PR 623.C75 1994

Ethnic Writers

<i>Asian American Novelists</i>	Ref PS 153.A84 A825 2000
<i>Dictionary of Native American Literature</i>	Ref PS 153.I52 D53 1994
<i>Latino and Latina Writers</i>	Ref PS 153.H56 L39 2004
<i>African American Literature</i>	Ref PS 153.N5 G73 2005
<i>Greenwood Ency. of Multiethnic American Lit.</i>	Ref PS 153.M56 G74 2005

DATABASES:

Literary criticism from books, journals, magazines and reference works is available in full-text from the following online databases. Save yourself some time; send articles to your e-mail account, and read them later. You can also access the databases from home, or any off-campus location through the Library Home Page (<http://www.sjcc.edu/library>). You will be asked to enter your name and seven-digit college ID number to access the following databases.

Literature Resource Center

This database contains detailed information on works of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and drama by well known authors. The resources include scholarly articles, biographies, literary criticism, plot summaries, reviews, and links to selected websites. It also includes texts of poems and short stories published in contemporary journals and magazines.

Using the **Advanced Search** screen, simply type the name of a literary work, and combine it with the author's name. You can also enter additional keywords, if you are focusing on a specific aspect of the work or an author's style. For example, if you were researching *The Kite Runner*, the novel by Khalid Hosseini, type *Kite Runner* in the **Name of Work** box, and *Hosseini* in the **Person-By or About** box. If you only want to read articles that deal with *guilt* as a theme, type that into the **Keyword** box. The search results will be organized under headings, such as Literature Criticism; Biographies; Reviews, etc.

Expanded Academic ASAP

Critical essays, reviews, interviews, biographies, stories and poems can be found in magazine and academic journal articles supplied by this database.

Use the **Advanced Search** to find articles on a specific work, character or topic. For example, to search for information on the character, Iago, in Shakespeare's play, *Othello*, type *Iago* in one **Keyword** search box, type *Shakespeare* in another keyword search box, and *Othello* in another. **Limit results of your search to documents with full text** by putting a check mark in the full-text box under "Limit to".

You can also do a **Browse Subjects Search** on the author you are researching. You can narrow your search to: *biography*, *criticism*, etc. by looking at the **subdivisions** listed under the author's name. Once you have generated the search, limit the results to documents with full-text. You can also limit your search by entering additional search terms in the "Refine Results" box.

Web Sites

Beware of the Web. Unless you are an expert on your topic, it may be difficult to find a reliable site using Google or Yahoo. From the **Library Home Page**, click **Research Aids**, and then select **Best Websites**. Search engines such as *IPL2 (Internet Public Library)* will generate fewer, but better quality sites.

ALWAYS REMEMBER TO ASK A LIBRARIAN IF YOU NEED HELP:

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- In developing a search strategy appropriate to your assignment and thesis.
 - To evaluate your sources and to suggest additional research options.
 - For assistance with the **Works Cited** format.